

Drawn Out

November 8–February 1, 1987
The Corcoran Gallery of Art
Washington, D.C.

SPECTRUM is supported by a grant from
the National Endowment for the Arts.

Jack Barth
Troy Brauntuch
Mike Glier
Michael Hurson
Jody Mussoff
Randy Twaddle
Andrea Way

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Exhibition organized and text written by
Ned Rifkin, Curator of Contemporary Art.

It is often said that we now live in an age of specialization. Relatively few physicians practice general medicine; the scholar rarely delves deeply into more than one area of investigation. Expertise is cherished for the depths of knowledge and insight that can be mined from a narrow focus of professional activity.

This has long been so for the visual arts. Artists, with some notable exceptions, usually refer to themselves in terms of whatever mediums they employ, be they painters, sculptors, printmakers or photographers. Because art is articulated through a visual language system, the mastery of a particular medium is akin to the development of a vocabulary sophisticated enough to promote the artist's fluency and voice, as it were. After a period of critical focus on alternative methods of expression, e.g. video, earthworks, body and performance art, narrative work, sound installations, and environments, there has been a return of attention to the more venerable mediums of painting and sculpture in recent years. These other, more conceptually motivated genres are now part of the overall texture of creative contemporary activity.

One medium that nearly all visual artists return to at one time or another is drawing. Whether it is to loosen up their dexterity, to diagram a notion, to expand their ways of seeing, to experiment with ideas, or to provide themselves with more immediate forms of expression, most artists draw. Frequently, a categorical examination of an artist's drawings will shed new light on his or her paintings or sculptures. In fact, it is precisely the secondary function, as a preliminary stage to the final creative effort, that has shaped our appreciation of drawing.

Unfortunately, this role by which drawing is frequently defined has all too often diminished the intrinsic value of the medium. It is not unusual for the equation between a drawing and a sketch to be made. However, these terms are not synonymous. Many drawings are considerably more "complete" than related works of painting or sculpture since different techniques necessitate different approaches to "finish." The strength of drawing as a method, rather than as a medium, is such that it can exist in a less resolved, more immediate and, in many respects, more intimate and revealing state.

There is a small number of contemporary artists for whom drawing is the primary means of expression. Given that painting has only recently returned to the art market as the dominant medium, a total commitment to drawing seems almost anachronistic. It is not unusual for many of these artists to be excluded from important collections and special exhibitions simply because they neither paint nor sculpt. Moreover, given the generally held prejudice that drawing is something that an artist does in preparing to make his or her art, merely a "warm up" for the creative process, an artist's choice of drawing as his or her "specialty" discloses considerable will and perhaps even a dogged defiance which merits further investigation.

Normally, the way we talk about something, the words we use, reveals a great deal about attitudes. The word "draw" is typically combined with prepositions. When we describe someone who is somehow protecting themselves we refer to them as "drawn in." If we are utilizing a resource, we "draw upon" something. When convinced against our better judgment we say we have been "drawn into" something. Thus, in its various permutations, the word retains its verbal nature, i.e. it has to do with the activity of

pulling or summoning. "To draw out," eliciting some feeling or making visible that which is slow to reveal itself, is yet another example of how the word can be flexible, used to elicit another meaning. However, this same phrase also suggests the sustained attenuation or elongation of an event, to savor or to extend it in some way. It is in both these senses that you are presented with the works of seven artists, displaying notably distinct sensibilities and diverse approaches to the method of drawing.

Four of these artists—Jack Barth, Michael Hurson, Jody Mussoff, and Andrea Way—draw exclusively, though two of them (Barth and Hurson) consider themselves painters. Troy Brauntuch, Mike Glier, and Randy Twaddle have all painted, but it is drawing which fundamentally nourishes their vision, generating new ideas and emotions. Significant among all seven is their interest in the unique way that drawing can evoke memory, be it through a sense of historical time or a temporal ambiance. Some use drawing more conceptually, as a tool, mapping device or cultural logotype. Others draw as a means of experimentation and investigation while, for at least two, the immediacy of drawing induces more subtle, psychological nuances to emerge.

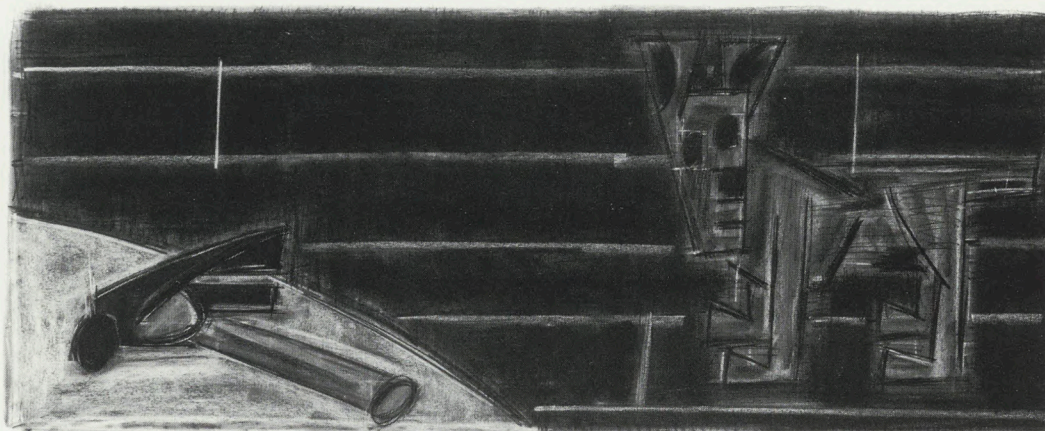


Photo: © Geoffrey Clements

Above:

Gioco delle Coppie (Games of Pairs) 1985
pencil, conte crayon on paper
37½ × 15 inches
Collection of Robert Moskowitz

Michael Hurson

"I might paint again," says Michael Hurson, "but I have been saying that for five years." In fact, since 1978, the year he was included in the important *New Image Painting* exhibition of that year organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, Hurson has been doing modest sized pastel drawings on paper to the exclusion of painting and sculpture.

Originally from the midwest, Hurson's experiences following his graduate work at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago as an assistant and close friend to puppeteer Burr Tillstrom (creator of *Kukla, Fran and Ollie*) had a lasting effect on him. In addition to paintings, Hurson also made pristine miniarchitectural interiors, environments meticulously crafted out of balsa wood. These display the same fastidious care and restraint discernible in the seven drawings presented here. More recently, Hurson has authored an off-Broadway play, produced by Joseph Papp, whose only two "characters" were light bulbs.

In 1976, when he moved to New York, Hurson developed friendships with some of the lights of the avant-garde at that time, including Sol Lewitt and Jennifer Bartlett who were particularly influential. Both artists, in decidedly different ways, were working with "the grid" or some variation of it. For Hurson, the use of this motif has been akin to his cross-hatching and mock-cubist style. These elements function as a dialect within the artist's visual language, signaling a more conceptual attitude. For example, in

Man Reading a Newspaper (1983), a work inspired by a friend's snapshot, the fragmented planes are disjunctive—as in a painting by Juan Gris—but the grid unifies the composition as much as it divides it. In all of his work, referencing of style and technique is both an engaging of them as well as a subtle aesthetic conceit. As Hurson explains, he "used cubism as a device," as the "most modern of methods, one that hasn't been used up." In a similar manner, he employs the grid to evoke both the order and method of the minimal art that dominated the art of the mid-70s in New York at the time of his arrival. Simultaneously, it reminds us of how the old masters might have ruled off a drawing in order to have it transferred to a canvas or a wall for a larger scale painting.

Some time ago, a friend gave Hurson a black and white photograph of the famous French designer Christian Dior, depicted sitting outdoors at a round table, holding some playing cards. Dior looks off, out of the frame at something that has momentarily caught his attention. Behind is a house; in the foreground on the table is a bowl of fruit. Hurson was having difficulty drawing one of Dior's ears, so he went out and purchased a plaster cast of an ear to use as a model. After hanging the cast on the wall, he set out to render the ear. He finished *Plaster Cast of an Ear and Picture Hook* (1985)

without a great deal of struggle, and then looked down to see the hammer with which he had nailed the hook to the wall. This then became the impetus for a new drawing which ultimately yielded *Gioco delle Coppie* (*Game of Pairs*). Hurson never returned to his drawing of Dior, but he had, in the process, incorporated the round table from the foreground of the photograph into this third drawing. The title refers neither to the game of cards that Dior was playing nor to the two pairs (fruit) in the source photograph but serves as a memorial tribute to his good friend Tillstrom, who had used a piece of music by this title for a hand puppet ballet several years before. The final drawing, with its complex genesis and enigmatic title, is typically charged with psychological readings and metaphorical meanings, despite the fact that, as with all of his work, the artist's intuition operates at maximum capacity. Michael Hurson's drawings of the past ten years embody his elusive vision of isolated things or people in the world, their stubborn, sometimes curious form, and their fragile presence.

Jody Mussoff

While it can be argued that every artist's work is a self-portrait, some are deliberately, others indirectly, while a majority are oblique inflections toward this end. Jody Mussoff invariably creates images of young women who are in various states of passage or dramatic situations which address her own personal struggle to define herself. "I think of them as myself," she says. On the other hand, Mussoff is constantly watching, observing and incorporating people's body language, facial features and hand gestures into her work. She never works from a photograph and eschews life drawing from a model. "People I see are stored in my mind," she explains.

In *Brunette Emerging from Torso* (1985), a young woman wearing a pink leotard pauses half way out of a monochromatic semi-nude torso. On the most obvious level, this work

is concerned with the relationship of outer versus inner self, or the battle between one's ideal and real identities. However, the crucial axis is embodied in the way this figure is stopped, not struggling to wrest herself free from this artificial shell, not anxious about her fate, but looking somewhat numb or resigned to this state of limbo. The primary tension in the drawing comes from the cantilevered red rectangle that throws the figure into greater visual relief and adds an important note of urgency and imbalance to this image of stasis.

This passivity is seen again in *Woman with Raven* (1985), a more disconcerting image, thanks to the depiction of the black bird coming out of the young woman's chest area. Her eyes peer directly out, thereby thrusting the viewer into the role of witness to this implausible event. But the woman's eyes do not engage the viewer's like those of Manet's *Olympia* whose uncompromising gaze casts us into the role of voyeur; rather they seem glazed and dreamy, perhaps a bit incredulous but nevertheless resigned. By contrast, the bird's eye is wild, blind to anything save its desperate struggle to separate itself from the woman's body. At first, one can read this image as an essay on death. Yet the black bird, an ominous symbol, seems to be more threatened and considerably more animated than the rather docile woman. Perhaps the artist is unconsciously making a statement about the human dilemma of having to define life in terms of death.

In most of Mussoff's drawings, figures appear isolated or displaced in a vacuum-like space. In *Atlas* (1986) this becomes a "theater" of the mind, with the "player" on the most schematic of stages, a sketched elliptical line. No more than twelve or thirteen years old, the girl is positioned kneeling on her hands and knees, her head cropped by a horizontal curtain comprised of four close-ups of her face seen from different angles. The conjunction of her head with these enlarged details of her face suggests the various personae or masks available to her, each of which is considerably stronger and more resolved than her own bewildered and

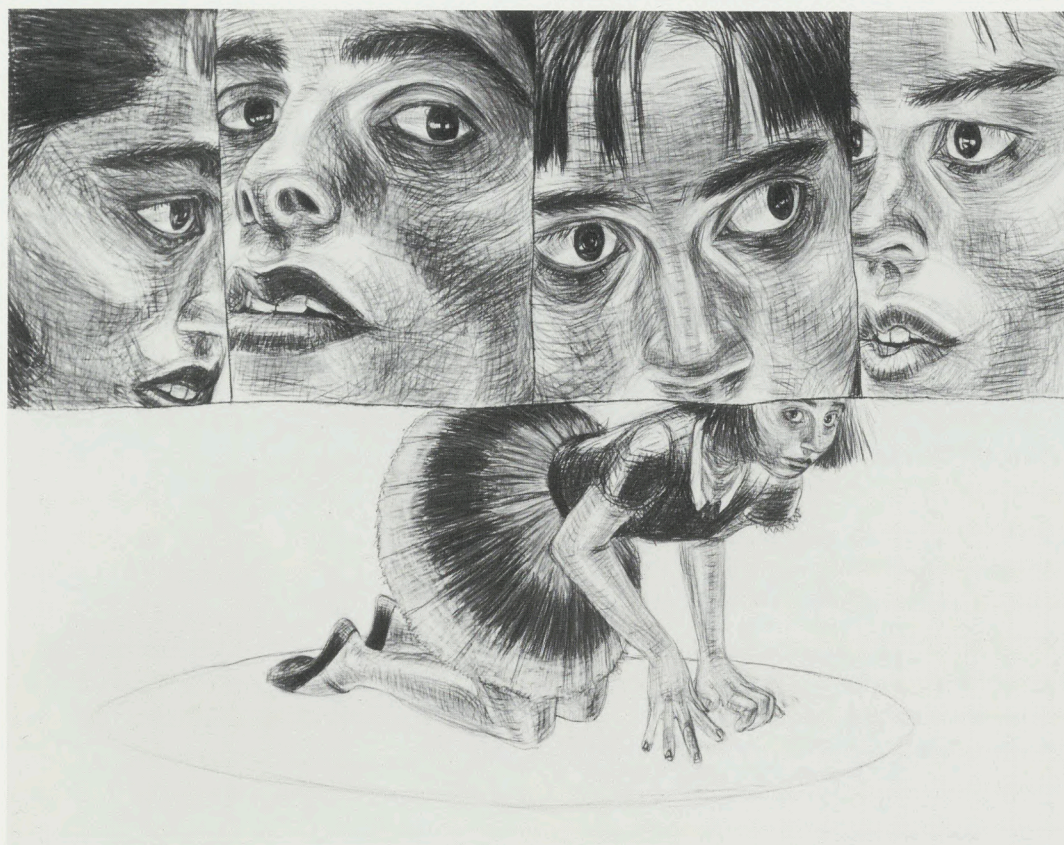


Photo: Gary Garrison

somewhat forlorn visage. As Atlas is burdened with supporting the world, this girl is encumbered with the responsibility to select the mask congruent with her inner needs.

As in nearly all of the artist's work, the figure's hands manifest a division within the character and, by extension, within Mussoff herself. On a subliminal level, the composition of this work draws the viewer's attention to the eyes. The upper half, the "curtain" referred to above, establishes a rhythmic rise and fall by moving across (left to right) following the eyes in the detailed views. This, together with the edge of the bottom of the curtain at the brow of the figure's right eye, creates dramatic suspense and psychological tension as well as a sense of gravity and motion. Concerning *Atlas*, Mussoff commented, "She is holding up something very important." However, when pressed further on what was being supported, the artist was not entirely clear herself.

Above:

Atlas 1986
colored pencil on paper
48½ × 60 inches
Courtesy of Gallery K

Given the secondary subject of the drawing, the eye as a metaphor for the act of seeing, both inwardly and outwardly, perhaps this female Atlas is weighted down with the uncertainty every artist experiences, i.e. generating adequate support, both aesthetic and financial, for his or her vision that has been forged with enormous risk and sacrifice. Since Mussoff has stated that she identifies personally with her characters, it is reasonable to assume that we are watching the artist on stage in the capacity of a performance, like a "show" or public exhibition, perhaps in need of selecting one of her various surrogate selves to make yet another drawing concerning her ongoing efforts to maintain her fortitude and vulnerability, the axis of her creative endeavor.

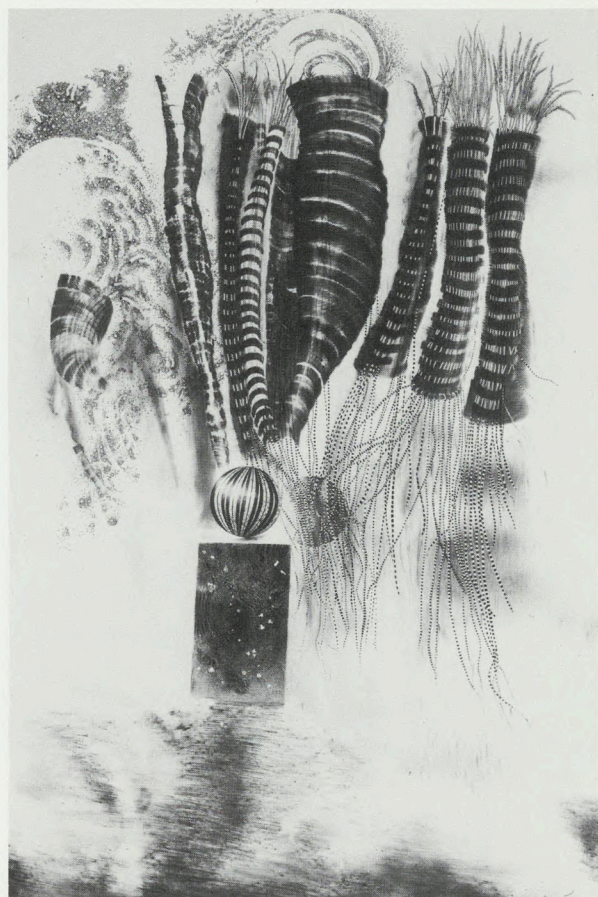


Photo: Zindman/Fremont

Above:

Altar of Prosperous Voyage 1983

charcoal on paper

91 × 60¾ inches

Courtesy of the artist

Jack Barth

Jack Barth considers his drawings to be paintings. They are, after all, painstakingly filled in, detail by detail, with black oil over the rich charcoal markings. He is included in this exhibition because his primary means of generating his art is through drawing. In fact, for Barth, drawing is the essence of his creative process and drawing out—evocation—his fundamental goal.

Originally interested in history as a college student, Barth came to New York from Los Angeles thirteen years ago after completing graduate work in fine arts. His sense of vast, historical time and his understanding that history is continually revised are at the core of his work. A vigorous intellectual with a healthy appetite for learning from other artists, philosophers, poets, and critics of contemporary culture, Barth quietly and slowly works his pieces over as much as

three years' time. He has assimilated and synthesized some diverse historical influences including the hyperbolic, nostalgic depictions of ancient Roman ruins in the work of the 18th-century printmaker Giovanni Piranesi, the yearning and melancholy visible in the paintings of the early 19th-century German Romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich, the mystical theories and poetry of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and the metaphysical works of the Italian Giorgio De Chirico. More recent sources include Barnett Newman's writings on the Kabala and the sublime, the monumental earthworks of Robert Smithson and his ideas concerning entropy, and California abstract painter John McLaughlin's eastern concepts of luminosity. There are numerous other models for Barth, who continues to be a conscientious and diligent observer of human thought and creativity.

Around 1980, after years of searching for a viable visual metaphor, Barth found the urban park an appropriate analogy for memory and its functions. He realized that walking in a city park, this vestigial landscape preserved and deliberately manipulated to set up scenic views in the tradition of 18th-century English landscape design, was a perceptual voyage, one that activated a kind of mental distance. Rousseau's *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* provided stimulus for this connection, whereby the walker embarks on a symbolic pilgrimage to commune with God or the spirit through contact with nature. Barth would walk and sketch, finally discovering that he wanted his work to distill a sense of place.

He decided to create images of undefined shrines in order to skew the function of a religious altar, providing a more metaphysical thrust. He began a sequence of pieces such as the *Altar of Prosperous Voyage* (1983). Within this drawing, the viewer discerns a highly rendered sphere placed on a pedestal. Upon close inspection, this orb discloses a curious physical relationship to the base: it appears to hover just above it, and seems tilted or pitched back at an awkward angle. In fact, while it is fully modelled in an illusionistic one-point perspective technique, it is done so with a different vanishing point than the pedestal, setting up a visual discrepancy and thereby a subtle tension. It is on this level of nuance that Barth's work operates on the viewer to present what the artist calls a "moral choice." He explains, "When one becomes aestheticized, one becomes moral in a sense." The artist attempts to "provoke associative meaning triggered by involuntary memory" in his work.

In *Resolution* (1980), an earlier work, the darkness of the scene depicted beneath a bridge includes a direct quotation from a mezzotint after the John Constable painting of *Hadleigh's Castle*. This ruin, a symbol of absence to this 19th-century English painter, the tragic loss of his wife, is integrated into this view under a bridge in New York's Central Park in order to conflate our sense of time and place. This deliberate obfuscation, the dark foreboding window created by the bridge's structure, speaks as eloquently about the mind's deletions (i.e. how memory involves erasure of most everything)

as it does about what is ultimately retrievable. In this sense, Barth's drawings are often more concerned with, as the artist states, "what is not there." For Barth, a bridge, the spanning of two otherwise separate and inaccessible places, becomes the frame of the mind's eye.

Troy Brauntuch

Viewing Troy Brauntuch's work is like watching afterimages that remain inside your eyelids replayed for you in superslow motion. In the case of Brauntuch's art, however, the normally fugitive state of retinal impulses is neither fixed nor ephemeral, but thaws gradually into a pool of dissolving darkness. This nebulous suspension suggests the inner reaches of the mind. As in dreams, images emerge as vague tableaux. Like thoughts they appear briefly, disconnected, and, as often as not, impossible to retrieve, despite our attempts to tether them to other such thoughts and images. As Douglas Blau perceptively wrote about Brauntuch's art in a recent catalogue essay for the artist's last solo exhibition, the experience might be akin to a seafarer lost at sea, "drifting with vision blurred, lacking position and bearings. . . The eyes are open but are deprived of sight, leaving the onlooker to grope amidst unstable surroundings."

There are other artists who have worked in this shadowy realm, though none closer in effect than the great American expatriate James Abbott McNeill Whistler, whose painted *Nocturnes* and exquisite etchings joined the elegant poetry of Japanese art to the palpable mist of London's fogs. In a comparable manner, Brauntuch's recent works on black cotton place the prodigious trappings of grand opera and Baroque architecture adjacent to the beguiling mystery and deadpan veracity of photographic phenomenon. Like a Josef von Sternberg film, an Edward Steichen pigment print, or a Robert Wilson stage production, Brauntuch's penchant for dramatic mise-en-scène is imbedded in the power of suggestion that contrasting light and darkness elicits. Brauntuch leads us into an unfamiliar darkened space, providing us with just enough visual stimuli to activate our will to see, but never enough to confirm or deny our uncertain perceptions.

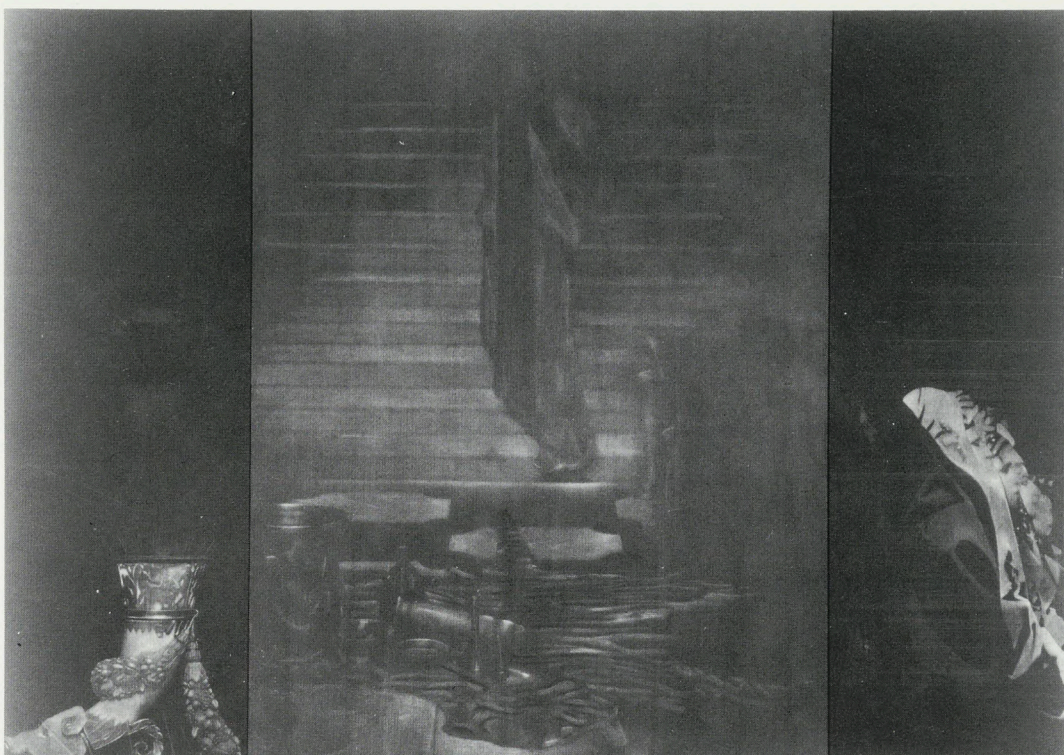


Photo: Zindman/Fremont

Above:

Purple and Silver 1984
graphite, ink, pastel on cotton,
linen
108 x 156 inches
Collection of Barbara and Eugene
Schwartz

Purple and Silver (1984), the large triptych presented here, is like a penumbral altarpiece discovered in an old church ruin in some foreign land. There is a deliberate opulence visible, meticulously drawn so as to impose a good deal of distance, like an old daguerreotype whose photosensitive coating has worn off in certain places, thereby subverting a complete reading of the visual evidence available. Like Jack Barth, Troy Brauntuch is primarily interested in evocation through the deletion of information. Brauntuch generates possibilities of remotely held associations by rendering fragments of familiar, yet elusive images of the world. Hence, the right panel of this work suggests images of folded silk, a sword blade, and a fish, each interpretation capable of modifying the headless figure/statue seen in the central section in a decidedly different way.

Brauntuch's current work achieves a theatrical effect not unlike one recently used in the production of Martha Clarke's *Vienna Lusthaus*. This entire dance piece takes place behind a white scrim stretched across the front plane of the stage. In this way, at various times, the audience became aware of the choreographer's mediation of the dramatic conventions of displaced time as well as the intended suggestion of a dreamlike realm of sublimated desires. Similarly, the gauzy texture of the stretched linen in Brauntuch's newest work emphasizes the porous quality of the surface and announces the substructure of the artist's drawn images. There is a noticeable breathing present which diminishes the imposed distance that was part of the artist's earlier works on black paper, which draws the viewer into the work, allowing greater participation in Brauntuch's paradoxical, ambiguous realm.

Andrea Way

Five years ago, Andrea Way was in an airplane flying to California when she began making drawings in a small sketchbook with a rapidograph that a friend had given to her. It was during this flight that she initiated what is now a developed body of work that pivots on an overlay of abstract patterns which the artist perceives as parallel to those of nature and culture, memory and history. This sketchbook has become a touchstone for Way, an artist who has discovered that she enjoys creating rules for her drawings so that she can demonstrate constructive departures from them.

At first, Way's method was a technique for killing time in waiting situations. Simply to distract herself from the tedium of anticipation, she wrote out the words of her counting in sequential numbers. Even in these earlier works, the imposition of one system (language) on another (numbers) is present. Gradually, markings and ciphers replaced the use of words. Other structural systems became important, sometimes ideationally inspired, at other times motivated by intuition. With time, Way found that she was generating one drawing out of another until she lost her preoccupation with the systems themselves, and, in the process, found her visual vocabulary. She learned that she was primarily interested in "seeing both sides" or taking opposing, often mutually exclusive systems, and forcing them into a visual merger by superimposing one on top of the other. In this way, she could maintain the integrity of each aspect and yet fuse them into a richer, more complex whole.

Electric Colonnade and *Beacon*, the two earlier works shown here, were both done in 1984. They demonstrate Way's penchant for setting up a rule and carrying it through until it fills the sheet of paper. The latter was suggested by watching a tennis match on television. Way wanted to realize an imaginary aerial map of the two players' shots from across the net. There is a back-and-forth rhythm that sets a somewhat chaotic pace for this piece, but one that reveals the artist's love of detail and meticulous hand.

The work of this past year has incorporated new effects gained largely through the use of rubbing to establish a more modulated field against which dots and linear activities are contrasted. What this has achieved in *Tracking* (1985), for example, is to create a sense of atmospheric depth and, as a result, a latent temporal sensation. Way's drawings are becoming more archaeological by intent, so that one may discern an overall pattern but, quietly seeping through this level is a more organic feeling which enriches the rules and patterns.

In this regard, *Night Buzz* (1986), one of the most active pieces to date, was inspired by the experience of camping outdoors at night. In the dark when her visual faculty no longer shaped her perception, Way became aware of all the new sounds she could hear. This, together with the elimination of the noise of civilization, resulted in what is essentially a diagram of the emanations of sounds.

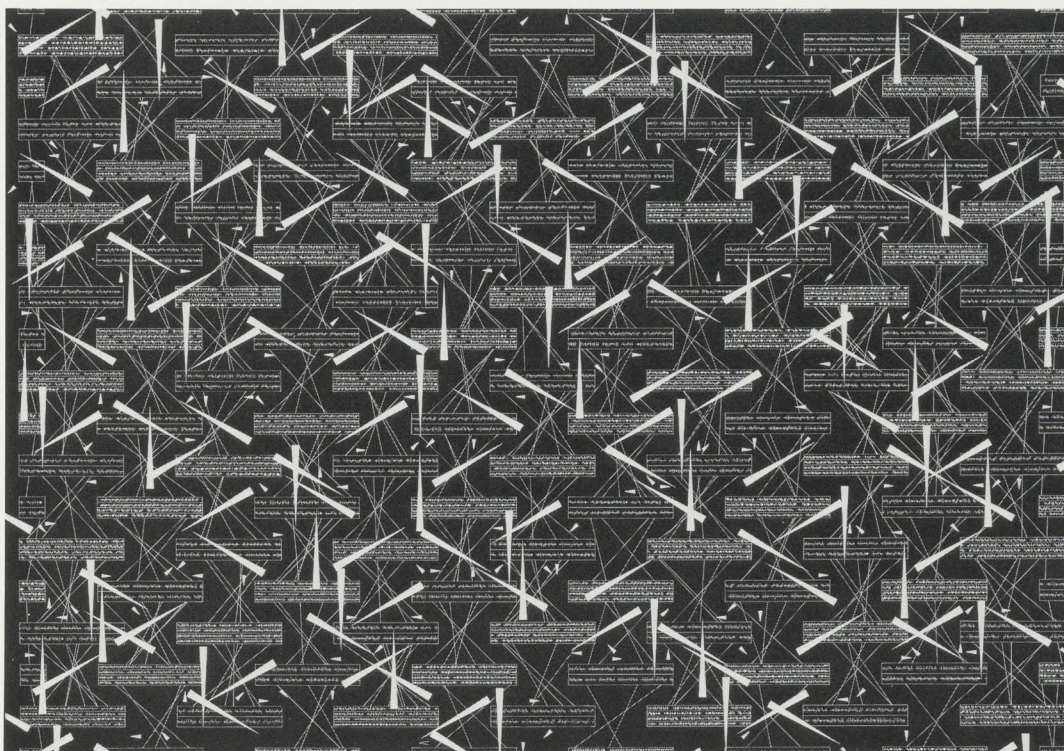


Photo: Allen Photo

Above:

Shots 1986
ink on paper
36 x 51½ inches
Collection of George T. Moran

By contrast, *Shots* (1986) is decidedly "more mechanical" as the artist describes it, though no less compelling or complex. Here the source has more to do with video games and computer screens than camping trips. Together these two larger drawings encompass the poles of the artist's recent orientation.

Way's preoccupation with grids, patterns, and codes is not in itself unique in the context of contemporary art. Artists as widely different in temperament as Sol Lewitt, Hannah Darboven, and Jonathan Borofsky have each developed systems of drawings that involve numbers or grids. Yet Way draws more inspiration from the great American sculptor David Smith and the endearing brilliance of Swiss artist Paul Klee. It is Smith's ability to incorporate everything in his creative method that Way especially admires, while it is Klee's "joyful approach and infinite variety" that serves as her model.

Way has been involved with drawing exclusively for several years now, despite the fact that she never liked to draw early on. She enjoyed experimenting with various mediums, working with collage for a considerable amount of time. However, the medium is not what excites her as much as the realization that new rules induce greater insights into her own creative spark. She explains, "Intuition is the pathway to the creative unconscious." Her recent direction in drawing has permitted her instincts greater range so that she finds that she is no longer satisfied with the codes and ciphers of a few years ago. Way has begun to discover how to incorporate her particular humanistic concerns to forge a more open and less programmatic content through her abstract drawings of life's many and varied patterns.

Randy Twaddle

Having left his native Missouri after graduating from college with an art degree, Randy Twaddle moved to Dallas in 1980. He stopped making paintings soon after, about three years ago. "I felt that I was putting a lot of marks on the canvas that were gratuitous and obligatory. Drawing allows me to be more conceptual," he explains. Moreover, Twaddle feels that he "can arrive at an image more immediately" via drawing.

There is another dimension to Twaddle's creative work. In addition to his large scale charcoal drawings, he works with a MacIntosh computer sequencer in conjunction with a music synthesizer and image projector to present live performances. These occur infrequently, whenever he is able to complete a piece and find a suitable place to present it. Most of the time, however, it is drawing that sustains him.

For the past few years, Twaddle has been making large scale charcoal drawings of flat, silhouetted images of everything from a generic city skyline to the familiar pattern of chain link fences. At first these drawings had

no overt conceptual context, and were "initially intuitive, interesting images."

Recently, within the past year or more, his drawings have taken on definite social overtones. *The Anxious Rectangle* (1985), whose title harkens back to a famous book by the late art critic Harold Rosenberg, is a four-part work. Twaddle is interested in exploring the structure of culture. An easel, a billboard, a projection screen and a television on a small table are sequentially depicted as opaque sources of visual stimuli and information. Their frontality and scale, together with their blank, empty spaces, form an emphatic statement about our cultural appetite for simulated experiences. These vertical forms stand like surrogate figures. Twaddle's ironic attitude points out that we actually pay more attention to these inert objects than we do to real people.

The making of these images is something akin to the primitive cave dweller's need to depict the animals of the next day's hunt. The artist believes that to draw these objects with his hand renders them less powerful over him and somehow enables him to

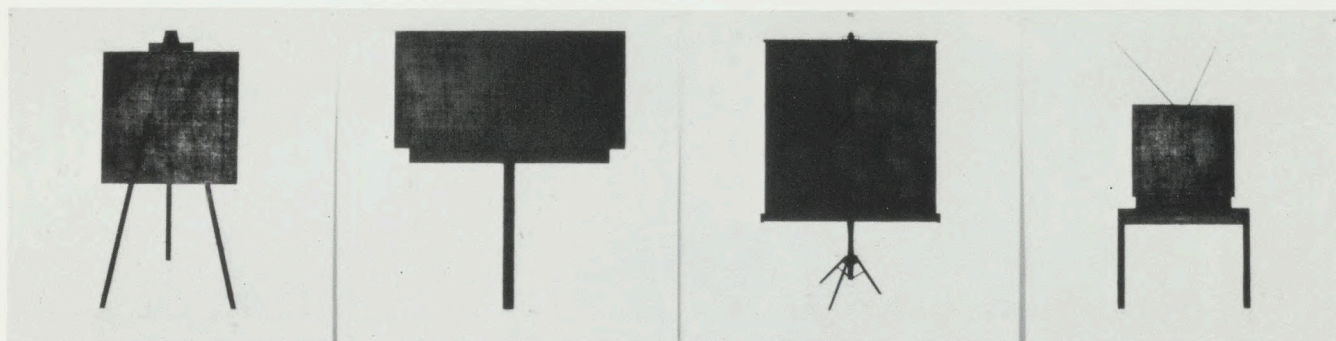


Photo: Moody Gallery

Above:

The Anxious Rectangle 1985
charcoal on paper (4 units)

43½ × 175½ inches

Courtesy of Moody Gallery, Houston, Texas

defuse their otherwise awesome impact on his life. The manufacture in these drawings is not immediately apparent from a distance since they initially appear to be emblems or logotypes from afar. But upon closer inspection, it is clear that these are hand-made since the artist's fingerprints, that most unique mark that can be made, are randomly visible throughout the white areas, revealing the process by which they are created. In this respect, Twaddle's drawings are reminiscent of the large scale drawings of Robert Moskowitz. Twaddle's contrast between high technology images and the modest, non-signature style of producing the drawing is also deliberately ironic.

Other works, such as *I, II, III, IIII* (*Aggression*), have more social implications. In this piece, the artist presents silhouettes of a flag pole, a two-pointed drafting compass, a machine gun on a tripod, and a lunar excursion module as the "quadruped." These are aspects of a technological evolution which extends the idea of national identity (the flag) into new territories (the moon).

Twaddle's love of contrasting the organic and the symbolic with high tech devices used for listening and watching finds another form in *Toward the Clean Kill* (1985) which includes a hunting knife, a rifle with a telescopic sight, and a closed-circuit surveil-

lance monitor, presented in sequential black charcoal silhouettes. The ominous suggestion of the advancement of our tools used to overcome and hunt down our various opponents—once wild game, now political leaders—has moved from the violence of survival and the hunt to the insidious fears that necessitate covert forms of eavesdropping and our need for security.

Early in 1986, Twaddle was commissioned to do a large wall drawing at the Tyler Art Museum in Texas. The result was *Early Warning System*, depicting from left to right a large flower, a column, two mirror image flags on two flagpoles, a cross, a gavel, a tower, and a standing radar dish. This work, done in situ the week of the installation of the other pieces included in his exhibition, is strangely figurative in nature. Like some of Twaddle's earlier drawings, the imagery progresses from nature and the organic to the symbols of the social, political and the cultural: architecture, justice, religion, national identity, industry and, finally, listening and gathering data. Twaddle's viewpoint, like Andrea Way's, focuses on the cultural codes of evolution and progress, using the simple left to right reading to indicate a chronological time line. Marking these changes succinctly, Randy Twaddle draws by hand to comment and alert us to the perilous state of mankind in today's world of unharnessed high technology.

Mike Glier

A native of Kentucky, Mike Glier went to New York in 1976 to participate in the Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Program, after graduating from Williams College with a liberal arts degree in psychology. It was about a year later that he came across *X* magazine, a publication of Collaborative Projects, Inc., an artists' organization involved in group political initiatives. It was at this point that Glier realized that it was possible, even desirable, to make art that addressed social issues as an aspect of the artist's environment—to become an artist/journalist, or, as Glier puts it, an "investigator." He explains, "I am not really a political artist. I am an artist who responds to situations in which he finds himself participating."

This statement is borne out by some recent changes that are evident in his newest work, including this site specific wall drawing commissioned by the Corcoran for this exhibition. Earlier this fall, Glier created a monumental drawing for the Washington Project for the Arts which focused on scenes from a funeral in South Africa juxtaposed with several drawings of tall nudes covering up their nakedness. Both aspects dealt with a holding back, a form of repression, and a degree of human vulnerability. The effect of this work was startling, particularly since it was visible from outside of the space through large windows to the street. The imagery was provocative, though not overt in terms of its source, yet equally poetic thanks to the artist's skills as a draftsman. Motivated by world issues and placed as it was, the drawing operated on a quasi-public art level, like a mural.

Two years ago, Glier and his wife moved their studios out of Manhattan's Lower East Side to an area of upstate New York near the Vermont border. This shift from a densely populated, impoverished urban environment to a more open natural setting has had a significant impact on Glier and his work.

I felt a real need to come up with an image that was more positive and soothing. I have a real respect for artists like Alexander Calder who make public art and can manage to be cheerful and uplifting without being stupid. It is easier to make anxious art. I would like to make art that is more positive and constructive without being silly, romantic, and nostalgic.

This change, then, moves Glier away from a preoccupation with figures in social situations to decidedly non-narrative, non-figurative wall drawings which utilize images of vast distance, natural devastation, and random growth. The piece at the Corcoran employs a tactical use of the building's colonnaded atrium, contrasting the illusion of interior architectural space with that of an open outside landscape exterior.

Glier's technique is involved equally with drawing and subsequently erasing or painting out with white latex that matches the wall's color. "I erase half of it," he remarked. Aesthetically, Glier is quite clear about making art that is temporary and, in this sense, ephemeral. His interest in drawing on the walls in galleries and museums began soon after he arrived in New York. He made

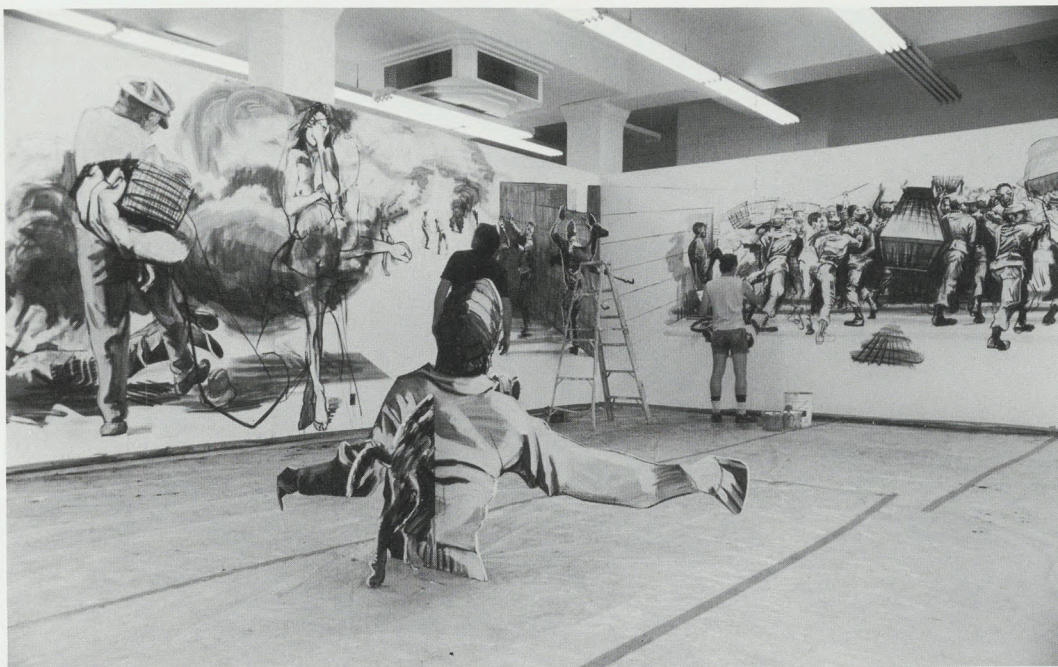


Photo: Jock Reynolds

Above:

South African Series 1986
chalk, charcoal, and latex on wall
Courtesy Barbara Galdstone Gallery

forty pieces in his studio as experiments in order to see what themes might emerge. He discovered that he enjoyed both the physical scale of drawing on walls, as opposed to the confinement he felt from pre-cut pieces of paper, but he was also interested in avoiding issues or making art for the marketplace. As he wrote in a recent catalogue for *Wall Works*, an exhibition at the John Weber Gallery in SoHo

Impermanent wall drawing... allows me to work spontaneously with specific topics of current interest. Utilizing the architecture and scale of a room, wall drawing incorporates the third dimension... (It) emphasizes the here and now. Unlike a framed picture that suggests a window through which we see a vision of another place and time, wall drawing emphasizes the immediate situation of the gallery and the moment of viewing. Since it can't be transported and most often will soon disappear, its momentariness makes it emotionally touching.

Glier's commitment to drawing has something to do with his sense of freedom and the immediacy that the medium offers and promotes, both for the artist and the viewer. He says he prefers to draw

because it's stripped of a heavy sense of materials... When you reduce yourself to black and white, it's obviously not realism. It's already heavily abstracted so I think it's a little clearer that it's about the communication of an idea rather than representation.

Like the other six artists presented here, Mike Glier's love of drawing has enabled him to investigate events in the world and aspects within himself that would not otherwise have been identified and drawn out.

Works in the Exhibition

Jack Barth

Resolution 1980
oil and charcoal on paper
60 × 69 inches
Collection of Carol and Arthur
Goldberg

Altar of Prosperous Voyage 1983
charcoal on paper
91 × 60¾ inches
Courtesy of the artist

Concord 1984-86
oil and charcoal on canvas
60 × 71 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Troy Brauntuch

Purple and Silver 1984
graphite, ink, pastel on cotton,
linen
108 × 156 inches
Collection of Barbara and Eugene
Schwartz

Mike Glier

The Second Sketch of Chernobyl 1986
chalk, charcoal, and latex on wall
204 × 324 inches
Courtesy of Barbara Gladstone Gallery

Michael Hurson

Fire Hydrant 1982
pencil, pastel, conte crayon on
paper
24 × 19 inches
Collection of Lois Long

Study for a Composition 1982
pencil, ink, pastel, conte crayon
on paper
36 × 18 inches
Collection of Henry Geldzahler

Man Reading a Newspaper 1983
pencil, conte crayon, gouache on
paper
36 × 15 inches
Collection of Albert Boltax

Slippers in a Play 1983
pencil, pastel, conte crayon, ink
on paper
10½ × 21 inches
Collection of Mrs. Marina
Kellen-Gundlach

Gioco delle Coppie (Games of Pairs) 1985
pencil, conte crayon on paper
37½ × 15 inches
Collection of Robert Moskowitz

Study for Drawing with Handle 1985
pencil, conte crayon on paper
27 × 13½ inches
Private Collection, New York

*Plaster Cast of an Ear and Picture
Hook* 1985
pencil, conte crayon, ink on paper
18 × 12 inches
Collection of Douglas Baxter

Jody Mussoff

Woman with Raven 1985
colored pencil on paper
43 × 31 inches
Collection of the Lerner
Companies

Brunette Emerging from Torso 1985
colored pencil on paper
60 × 39 inches
Courtesy of Gallery K

Atlas 1986
colored pencil on paper
48½ × 60 inches
Courtesy of Gallery K

Randy Twaddle

The Anxious Rectangle 1985
charcoal on paper (4 units)
43½ × 175½ inches
Courtesy of Moody Gallery, Houston,
Texas

Andrea Way

Beacon 1984
ink and pencil on paper
22 × 30 inches
Collection of the Lerner
Companies

Electric Colonade 1985
ink and pencil on paper
22 × 30 inches
Collection of Mark Hasencamp and
Kristine Stiles

Tracking 1985
colored pencil and ink on paper
30 × 44 inches
Collection of Bill Maughan and Joy
Midman

Night Buzz 1986
ink, metallic gold ink, on paper
36 × 51½ inches
Collection of Murray and Constance
Bring

Shots 1986
ink on paper
36 × 51½ inches
Collection of George T. Moran

Related Events

Wednesday, December 3

Ned Rifkin

Wednesday Gallery Talk

a walk through the exhibition with
Curator of Contemporary Art as he explains
his selection of artists for *SPECTRUM: Drawn Out*
12:30 p.m.
The Corcoran Gallery of Art
Meet in the Atrium

Thursday, December 4

Michael Hurson

Art Talk

an hour-long slide presentation
7:00 p.m.
The Corcoran Gallery of Art
Hammer Auditorium

All events and programs are free and open to the public.